

Agency: 477 Department of Fish and Wildlife
Decision Package Code/Title: XL Close PS Herring & Reduce Urchin
Budget Period: 2011-13
Budget Level: PL - Performance Level

Recommendation Summary Text:

This initial 5% GF-S reduction option will close the commercial Puget Sound Pacific Herring bait fishery and reduce the commercial sea urchin and sea cucumber harvest by approximately 30%. Loss of staff capacity would require the Department to passively manage the commercial sea urchin and sea cucumber fisheries on a more conservative basis, resulting in lost harvest opportunity. Fishers will no longer be able to buy fresh herring bait from a local market. Commercial sea urchin and sea cucumber fishers will lose income and the fisheries will not be as economically viable. The resulting ex-vessel value (price received by fishermen) decrease could be approximately \$500,000 per year.

Fiscal Detail

Operating Expenditures	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>Total</u>
001-1 General Fund - Basic Account-State	(93,283)	(93,283)	(186,566)
Total Cost	(93,283)	(93,283)	(186,566)
Staffing	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>Annual Average</u>
FTEs	-1.1	-1.1	-1.1

Package Description:

WDFW assesses sea urchin and sea cucumber populations in Puget Sound to establish commercial harvest quotas and manages a commercial herring bait fishery in Puget Sound for public benefit. WDFW dive team conducts the sea urchin and sea cucumber assessments by surveying defined transects throughout Puget Sound once every three years. A commercial herring bait fishery is conducted to provide fresh bait for recreational and commercial fisheries. Harvest quotas for herring are based on spawner deposition surveys.

Economic pressures in Washington continue, reducing the revenue the state receives to fund state services. Projected General Fund -State (GF-S) revenues upon which the 2011-13 state budget was developed are not likely to meet expectations. In response, the Governor has requested a 5-10 percent reduction in 2011-13 GF-S budget.

WDFW is proposing to reduce the assessment of sea urchin and sea cucumber populations in Puget Sound and passively manage the fishery, and eliminate the commercial herring bait fishery. This reduction option includes the elimination of one Fish and Wildlife Biologist 2 position from the dive team, and reduces a Scientific Technician 4 forage fish position by 1.5 staff months per year.

This will reduce the population assessment information needed to actively manage commercial sea urchin and sea cucumber dive fisheries. As a result, those fisheries will have to be managed on a more conservative basis, reducing the harvest level by approximately 30%. Commercial fishers would see a reduction in income and loss of economic stability in their fisheries.

Closing the Puget Sound commercial herring bait fishery will eliminate fresh herring bait from the market. Fishers would have to explore alternative markets for bait, and may have to pay higher prices.

Name and Phone Number of Subject Matter Expert:

Craig Burley, Fish Management Division Manager (360) 902-2784

Narrative Justification and Impact Statement

What specific performance outcomes does the agency expect?

The harvest of sea urchin and sea cucumber in Puget Sound would be reduced by approximately 30%.

The Puget Sound commercial herring bait fishery would be closed.

All legislative districts connected to Puget Sound will be impacted.

Performance Measure Detail

Activity: A043 Fisheries Management

Incremental Changes

No measures submitted for package

Is this decision package essential to implement a strategy identified in the agency's strategic plan?

This reduction option directly impacts WDFW 2011-17 Strategic Plan Goal 2, Objective A) increase the economic benefits and public participation derived from sustainable fish and wildlife opportunities.

Does this decision package provide essential support to one of the Governor's priorities?

This reduction option lessens the Department's contribution towards improving the quality of Washington's natural resources by maintaining healthy fish and wildlife populations.

Does this decision package make key contributions to statewide results? Would it rate as a high priority in the Priorities of Government process?

This reduction option decreases the Department's contribution towards the following natural resource POG goals:

Preserve, Maintain and restore natural systems and landscapes; and

Establish safeguards and standards to protect natural resources.

What are the other important connections or impacts related to this proposal?

NA

What alternatives were explored by the agency, and why was this alternative chosen?

The Department first identified opportunities for savings or fund shifts and partnerships and looked for reductions that would have the least impact toward accomplishing our core functions. While the Department can no longer preserve its primary functions without relief from the current economic climate and funding limitations, the recommendations seek to minimize impacts to its core, while at the same time emphasizing our conservation mission.

What are the consequences of not funding this package?

This reduction option will reduce the economic stability and viability of the commercial sea urchin and sea cucumber fisheries in Puget Sound, and eliminate fresh herring as a recreational and commercial bait option in Puget Sound. Both will affect local business and economic benefits.

What is the relationship, if any, to the state's capital budget?

None

What changes would be required to existing statutes, rules, or contracts, in order to implement the change?

None

Expenditure and revenue calculations and assumptions

Fish and Wildlife Biologist 2:

Salary = \$4,088/mo. x 12 mo. = -\$49,036/year

Benefits = \$1,622/mo. x 12 mo. = -\$19,464/year

Total annual cost = -\$68,500

Scientific Technician 4:

Salary = \$3,800/mo. x 1.5 months = -\$5,700/year

Benefits = \$1,400/mo. x 1.5 months = -\$2,100/year

Goods and Services = -\$2,200/year

\$29,566 included in object E of this package represents the infrastructure and support costs associated with this program reduction. Recent administrative cuts have been deeper than program cuts, and administrative services reflect skeletal staffing levels. Future administrative cuts will therefore be proportionate to program reductions, and administrative functions will generally comply with state and federal laws.

Which costs and functions are one-time? Which are ongoing? What are the budget impacts in future biennia?

Given the economic losses associated with this package, the agency prefers this reduction to be one-time and not impact future biennia.

<u>Object Detail</u>	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>FY 2013</u>	<u>Total</u>
A Salaries And Wages	(54,736)	(54,736)	(109,472)
B Employee Benefits	(21,564)	(21,564)	(43,128)
E Goods And Services	(16,983)	(16,983)	(33,966)
Total Objects	(93,283)	(93,283)	(186,566)